

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00115 161201Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /067 W
----- 029174

R 161000Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2567

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 115

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJECT: RESENTMENT GROWS OVER JUDICIAL PROSECUTION OF
SECURITY FORCES

1. FOR THE PAST MONTH, PERIODIC REPORTS HAVE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS OF SIGNED PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS BY RESIDENTS OF SMALL COMMUNITIES OF NORTHERN GREECE TO END THE PROSECUTION OF MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES FOR ALLEGED MISCONDUCT DURING THE JUNTA PERIOD. THE PETITIONS PRESENT VARIATIONS ON THE THEME THAT THE CONTINUING LEGAL ACTIONS ARE INSTIGATED BY COMMUNISTS TO DEMORALIZE THE NATION'S SECURITY FORCES AND TO ACHIEVE THE COMMUNISTS' "KNOWN GOALS".

2. THE PETITION CAMPAIGN SHOWS REMARKABLE ORGANIZATION. ONE PETITION CONTAINED 797 SIGNATURES FOR 22 DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES; ANOTHER 627 SIGNATURES FROM 17 COMMUNITIES. IN MOST CASES, ABOUT 3-5 PERCENT OF A COMMUNITY'S POPULATION WILL HAVE SIGNED, ALTHOUGH IN ONE CASE 8 PERCENT SIGNED. WHEN MINORS ARE EXCLUDED, THIS PROBABLY REPRESENTS DOUBLE THAT PERCENTAGE OF THE ADULT POPULATION.

3. THE PRINCIPAL PUBLICIST, AND POSSIBLE ORGANIZER, OF THE PETITION CAMPAIGN IS THE CONSERVATIVE MORNING PAPER
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PAGE 02 THESSA 00115 161201Z

ELLINIKOS VORRAS WHICH PROMINENTLY REPORTS THEM ALL. THE

PAPER, THROUGH ITS HEADLINE WORDING IS REPORTING THE PETITIONS AND ACCOMPANYING EDITORIALS, SEEKS TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT RESENTMENT AGAINST THE CONTINUING TRIALS IS A GROWING PHENOMENON. IT ALSO USES OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO URGE THE END OF THE TRIALS. FOR EXAMPLE, A PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S RECENT REMARKS CALLING FOR AN END TO THE TRIALS WERE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSED IN AN ELLINIKOS VORRAS EDITORIAL WHICH ASKED RHETORICALLY, "DON'T WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ONLY FILL THE HONEST AND PATRIOTIC GREEK OFFICERS WITH BITTERNESS AND INDIGNATION, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE TWIST THE KNIFE IN AN OPEN WOUND WHICH WE ALL WISH HAD HEALED LONG AGO FOR THE COMMON GOOD?"

4. THE PETITIONS AND THE ELLINIKOS VORRAS PUBLICIZING OF THEM MAY BE THE PRODUCT OF, OR THE CAUSE OF, THE OCCASIONAL COMMENTS ON THE TRIALS WHICH WE ARE NOW HEARING THAT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH AND IT IS TIME TO FORGET THE PAST. ADMITTEDLY, THESE COMMENTS COME FROM THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, BUT THERE ARE ALSO THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORTED CARAMANLIS IN 1974, AND THEY SEE THE CONTINUING TRIALS AS JUST ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HIS CODDLING THE LEFT WHILE IGNORING WHAT THEY REGARD AS HIS TRUE CONSTITUENCY ON THE RIGHT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, JUNTA, PRESS COMMENTS, PETITIONS, POLITICAL TRIALS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976THESSA00115
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760099-0057
From: THESSALONIKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760354/aaaabvrd.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <17 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESENTMENT GROWS OVER JUDICIAL PROSECUTION OF SECURITY FORCES
TAGS: PINT, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006